

**Power of the People**

**From page 15**

during the flood. They were not only the low bid, but are members and neighbors of the Co-op. They did an amazing job on all of the work they did in our building.

Incorporated in the design of the building were energy efficiency measures, using materials that would last for the next 60 plus years, and a promise to the City that the building would not look like an industrial facility, but instead would capture the historic and cultural heritage of the community. It was decided to construct it with as much wood as possible to reflect the fact that Vernonia has been a timber town. The "lodge look" was selected and incorporated into the design and the selection of materials. While the building looks very expensive, in reality it is not – due to the careful choice of materials and design. The building was constructed for around \$120 per square foot. To help keep costs down, we reused everything we could from the old

building. Since we just remodeled it after the flood, it made no sense to discard items that the members recently purchased and have to repurchase them. Instead, we reused doors, furniture, toilets, sinks, dispensers, cabinets, appliances, and even dismantled the entire kitchen and reassembled it in the new building. Racks for the warehouse were purchased at 50 cents on the dollar from a company that went out of business, a forklift was purchased by selling old transformers to a recycler, a crane was purchased by selling items from the old building we were not going to be able to reuse and a chipper we no longer needed. We even reused some of the landscaping from the old building including the rocks. We also traded items for carpentry work.

The size of the facility is often questioned compared to our old building. The new facility is almost twice the size of the old one for some very specific reasons. Our old building was

not only insufficient for our current needs, but could not expand for future needs. We needed a facility that would handle current and future needs of the Co-op, allow us to operate more efficiently, and include room for items we had to keep up at the pole yard. The Co-op was losing thousands of dollars in materials, damages to property and equipment, and even vehicles stolen from our pole yard. The area was out of sight and almost impossible to secure. Metal theft was the primary problem. Now we have a building large enough to bring equipment and materials inside to a safer location. The cost savings will help pay back the cost of the new buildings.

Features are included in the new facility to make it useful as an emergency shelter for the community in case of another catastrophic event. The facility was upgraded to survive a Category 4 seismic event. Additional lighting was included so that the truck bays could be used as medical triage center

with the backup generator sized to power everything a center would need. The parking lot was configured to be able to land medical evac helicopters, garage doors were selected with the highest insulation value, both for energy efficiency and to allow the bays to be heated easily for shelter by the two heaters installed. WOEC also donated a generator to Wilcox and Flegel gas facility allowing fuel to be available for emergency vehicles and uses during an event, with the stipulation that minimum amounts of fuel be maintained at all times. The Board room is also available for community use.

The facilities we built truly belong to the members of the Co-op and the community that we serve. It was built for members for be proud of, knowing that it will last for years to come, be an asset to them and serve them, and represent and serve the Co-op staff as well. It is a much safer, healthier, and more efficient work environ-

ment than we had before. Yes, the building looks expensive, but we built it smart, not expensive. What is the final cost to the members each month? After receiving funds from FEMA for the sale of our old building, all of the reuse of materials and items from the old building, paying cash for the property, all of the trading and selling of items to pay for things we needed in the new building, the total amount the members pay each month for a \$3.5 million facility is \$3. That's right, only \$3 per month, which stayed within the membership survey response. For this, the membership has a new building built to last for the next 60 plus years that is more energy efficient, out of the flood plain, and designed to serve as an emergency shelter in case of another disaster event. The investment is a good one for now and for the future of West Oregon Electric Cooperative and its members.

**Letters**

**From page 3**

homeless. We have logged many volunteer hours while not working, making us feel like we are part of the community.

Do you really know what it means to be called homeless or to be homeless? Would you even know if the person next to you was homeless or about to be homeless? If it was your friend or family, what would you do? How can you help the homeless or jobless folks today? Do you even wish to?

Do you believe the homeless are lazy and don't wish to make it or just wish to survive?

Our family does appreciate what we have even more than before. When fruits and vegetables, or even sugar and toilet paper, are treats one really starts to think. What is truly important; what others think or how we feel about ourselves?

Homelessness isn't something one plans on or even wishes to be in today's world. And, it is different today than it was yesterday.

**Kimberly Brandt  
Vernonia**

**Ambition, hard work needed for success**

To the Editor:

In response to "Opinion" in the October 5, 2011 issue of the Independent – "Occupy Wall Street" is a recognition of inequity.

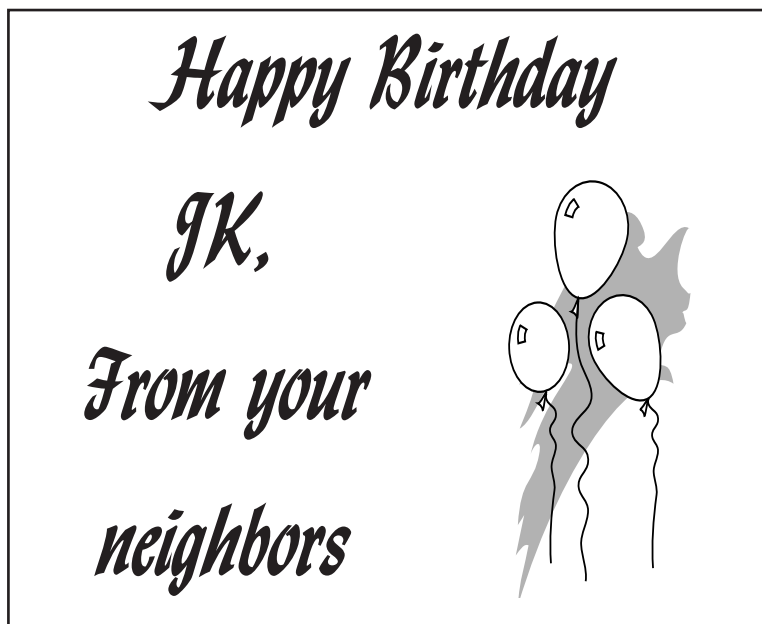
Our Declaration of Independence states, in part: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness..." All men are created equal and there is equal OPPORTUNITY. Where is it written that there should be equity of OUTCOME? Where is it written that there should be equality of income or living standard? Some people are more ambitious, work harder and are rewarded financially for it by the free market system. Others do not work as hard and are not rewarded to the same extent. Some refuse to work at all and become a burden on all who work. Why should we expect equal income for different amounts of work? Oh, yeah, that has been tried. In the for-

mer Soviet Union all workers were paid the same regardless of their initiative or how hard they worked. How well did that work out?

If we expect the government to make all things equal are we not surrendering our liberties to the government? The government that can give you everything also has the power to take everything away. Is it the role of government to be a Robin Hood seeking "social justice"? If you see a man on the street that is hungry and

you come up to me and demand (maybe at gunpoint) that I give you money to give to the hungry man, what should happen to you? I hope you would be arrested and tried for theft, no matter how "noble" your intentions to create "social justice". But that is exactly what the government does and it has the power of the sword. Is that the kind of country we want to have?

**Dick Martin  
Vernonia**



**WEATHER REPORT  
SEPTEMBER 2011**

DATE	TEMPERATURE		PRECIP. AMT.
	HI	LO	
1	75	39	--
2	68	39	--
3	84	37	--
4	89	37	--
5	85	38	--
6	87	39	--
7	93	42	--
8	88	47	--
9	88	44	--
10	91	43	--
11	94	45	--
12	76	55	T
13	67	55	--
14	64	53	--
15	62	52	T
16	66	47	.02
17	59	43	.22
18	64	54	.17
19	67	49	T
20	79	41	--
21	83	49	--
22	76	49	--
23	83	57	--
24	80	55	.01
25	71	53	.19
26	66	45	.02
27	65	55	.01
28	67	41	--
29	81	34	--
30	67	39	T

Temperature and precipitation amounts are from the official U.S. weather station at the Vernonia water plant. Measurable precipitation in September totalled .64 inches.